

Exploring the Lutheran Liturgy

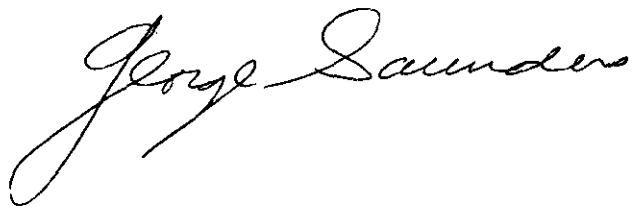
An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

Submitted to the Honors College in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduating with Honors

by

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Dr. George Saunders

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Saunders". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first name "George" being more prominent than the last name "Saunders".

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

April 2003



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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. George Saunders, for his unending suggestions and insight. His encouragement to stay on task is what excited and motivated me to finish this project.

I give thanks and appreciation to Pastor John Malzahn, from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, for taking time to share with me his knowledge and viewpoints.

To all the ministers and pastors who have shaped me along my faith journey, praise and adoration are not enough to express my thanks to you. You have inspired me to get to this point and pursue this study.

Finally, a big thank you to Amber for allowing me to use her computer.



Abstract

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The purpose of this thesis was to develop a curriculum that would teach Lutherans the history and significance of the Lutheran liturgy. It begins by stating the relevance of this project and continues in an introduction and history of liturgical worship, focusing on the Lutheran Church. The curriculum compares liturgical worship to a drama and breaks it into four acts: Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending. Each of these acts explains the meaning and significance of the components that make up the Lutheran liturgy. The curriculum concludes by offering different approaches to applying liturgy in worship.



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Preface

Styles of Worship: Liturgical or Free

This curriculum was put together with a Lutheran audience in mind. It was written to explain the liturgical style of worship and teach the liturgy to Lutherans. There are many styles of worship in the Christian church. Two categories of worship are liturgical and free. Both styles have been handed down from their earliest beginnings and place importance on tradition. This tradition is expressed differently in each style however. Liturgical worship is rather formal and structured requiring the congregation to participate in responses to the leader. It is practiced in Lutheran, Episcopal, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox churches. Free worship, on the other hand, is practiced in Baptist, Pentecostal, and the newer “mega churches.” It is less defined and restricted to structure and it differs from church to church and sometimes from Sunday to Sunday, depending on the circumstances (Corbett, 1997).

Worship Trends

Having been an active participant in both liturgical and free worship for several years, I have come to understand and appreciate both styles. Having been raised in a Lutheran church and then attending a Baptist church, I have also begun to question how each style affects other participants and how worship trends have changed. Research posted on the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) web page (www.elca.org), shows that church membership and worship attendance in the ELCA have slightly declined in the past thirteen years. Church membership in the ELCA has dropped from 5,251,534 in 1988 to 5,099,877 in 2001 (1988 to 2001 Racial/Ethnic Membership). Likewise the average



worship attendance has declined by more than five percent in 41.8 percent of the ELCA congregations, yet increased by more than five percent in only 28.8 percent of those congregations (The Percentage of ELCA Congregations). Even though there is a decline in church membership and attendance in the ELCA congregations, there are some people who have been drawn from their free churches into the liturgical church. One such Christian was Robert Webber, a professor of theology at Wheaton College. His book, *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail* (1985), highlights his and five others' experiences as they made their transition into the liturgical church. As I have studied and come to understand the liturgy more, I also have been drawn back to the liturgical roots of my Lutheran upbringing.

Concern for the Liturgy

Being interested in other Lutherans' attitude toward liturgical worship, I interviewed four males and seven females ranging in age from approximately nineteen to seventy. After interviewing these eleven Lutherans, I noticed a trend that concerned me. Of the eleven individuals interviewed, seven said that they grew up in the Lutheran church and four joined the Lutheran church after having spent time in a non-Lutheran church. A significant distinction was made between those who grew up in the Lutheran church and the new members. When asked about their knowledge and understanding of the Lutheran liturgy, the new members seemed to understand more about the history and meaning of the liturgy than those who grew up in the Lutheran church. When asked where they learned about the liturgy, all of the new members said they learned it in new member orientation classes, but those who grew up in the Lutheran church all had different responses. Most said that they learned about the liturgy



in confirmation classes when they were younger, however some learned it from their parents or spiritual leaders, and one said she learned some of it on her own as she grew in her faith.

As one who has grown up in the Lutheran church, I was never taught about our liturgy. I have acquired knowledge of the liturgy through my own biblical studies and through asking questions of Lutheran ministers. However I did not receive all of the information that I was looking for. Seeing my lack of knowledge and other Lutherans' lack of knowledge about our liturgy concerned me. For this reason I have researched the history and theology of the Lutheran liturgy and have put this curriculum together to be able to teach to Lutheran congregations.



the moment of decision.” The main element of the service that points to this moment of decision is the sermon. Webber described the sermon as being “the food that nourished the people, and transformed them. The sermon was, you might say, the main dish of the meal” (1985, p.35).

Martin Luther affirmed the importance of the sermon saying that the primary purpose of worship is to preach and teach God’s word diligently and purely in the sermon and enact God’s word in the sacrament of the meal (Plass, 1959). However, as Webber discovered in the liturgical churches that he began to attend, the preached word has greater significance when it leads, not to individual faith decisions, but to corporate faith actions in the sacrament of the church. Lutheran and other liturgical churches, worshipping with an emphasis on word and sacrament, end their services with a shared meal of the Eucharist.

Liturgical and Free Architecture

The difference in climax or focal point of liturgical and free worship is also evident in the architectural layout of the worship sanctuary.



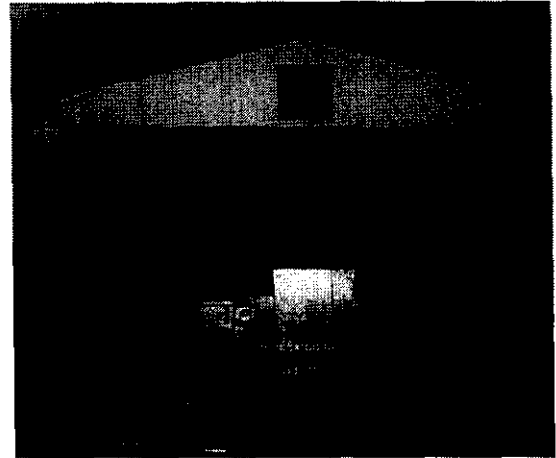
(Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Muncie, IN)

In the historical architecture of Lutheran and other liturgical churches, the altar and communion rail are located in the center (usually in the front) of the sanctuary. Here congregational members come together to share communion. On either side of the altar and communion rail



are the pulpit and lectern, from which the sermon is preached and the scriptures read. This represents the community coming forward in response to the sermon to share the meal.

In free churches however, the pulpit is in the center of the front of the sanctuary, along with the altar and choir stand. There is no communion rail because communion is distributed to each individual in his seat. This layout represents the individual coming forward to make a decision about her walk with Christ in response to the sermon.



(Union Baptist Church, Muncie, IN)

Ancient Communities and New Communities

Gordon Lathrop, a professor of liturgy at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, expands on the idea of word and sacrament of the liturgical church in calling it a juxtaposition. It combines the historicity of the Passover with the shared faith of Jesus' covenant and resurrection expressed in the Last Supper. Lathrop says, "To eat this meal in the community is to continue what began in the life of Jesus, who came eating and drinking, held meals with sinners, spoke of the dominion of God as a wedding feast, and interpreted his own death as a meal. For the community the meal is the very presence of Jesus himself" (Lathrop, 1993, p.43). This climax of corporate liturgical worship also emphasizes the concept of the community or assembly of believers.



Community is seen in liturgical worship in that there is a formal structure that requires the congregation to participate in responses to the leader. Lathrop (1999) discussed the community as the assembly, taken from the Greek word *ekklesia*. In his book *Holy People* he says, "We do not gather as individual consumers come to a priestly distributor of religious goods. We come to do a communal thing, to be a people, to receive a common vocation, to be a tangible representation of the biblical image 'assembly'"(p. 45). Therefore the liturgy is a juxtaposition of not just word and sacrament, but also of text and action. It is the biblical text spoken and acted upon by the community that brings meaning to the liturgy.

ekklesia= assembly

Questions:

1. What are some of the differences between liturgical and free worship?

2. What are some significant aspects of liturgical worship?



Application:

1. Go around the room and share one word that describes liturgical worship.
2. Share experiences that you have had in different types of worship services. What has been meaningful to you? What aspects emerge as significant?
3. In looking at these descriptions of liturgical and free worship, do you sense a distinction between personal, individual worship and communal worship? Do liturgical and free worship include both approaches? Explain. Discuss your own worship experiences in this way.



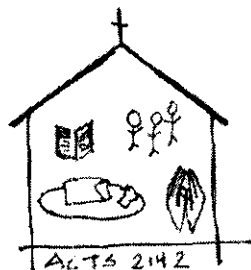
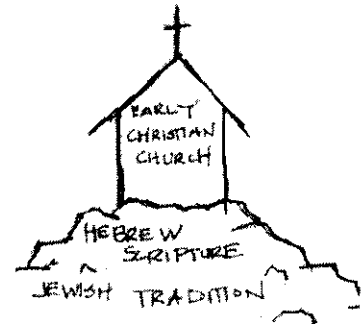
History: From the Old Testament to Your Local Parish

Key Question: What is the historical background for Lutheran liturgy?

Key People: *Martin Luther*
Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg

From Jewish Roots

To understand the significance of liturgy, we must first look at the origins of Christian worship. Early Christian worship is founded upon Old Testament Jewish practices. The first Christian churches were formed before the Bible was developed and the New Testament was known, so the worship practices were a product of tradition and Hebrew scripture. It did not put tradition up against scripture, but rather placed the scripture within the tradition (Malzahn, 2003). There is a juxtaposition between the Hebrew scripture and traditional corporate worship. Gordon Lathrop (1993) expressed this idea in saying, "Whatever the assembly means, it means by juxtaposing an old book and this present people" (p.16).



The traditional Jewish practices were used in Christian worship, but they expressed new meaning to the present people. The elements of present day worship are the same elements of the early Christian worship as seen in Acts 2:42 that says, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to



the breaking of bread and the prayers.” These early Christian acts were rooted in Jewish tradition, however they now have more significance for Christians set against the backdrop of our resurrected savior, Jesus Christ. For example, the breaking of bread, the Eucharistic meal that we share today, is modeled after the Jewish Seder meal. The Seder meal is a reminder of the Israelites exodus from Egypt. It is a retelling of the Passover in which the Lord passed over the homes of the Israelites saving their firstborn males from being killed under the command of the tenth plague (Exodus 12:13, 21-28). The Christian Eucharistic meal is a reminder of our exodus from sin, retelling the story of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who saved us from spiritual death.

To Early Christian Worship

As early Christian worship developed, distinctions could be made between two different types of early worship. First, there was a Jerusalem type of worship that met in the temple and synagogues. It also held private daily assemblies consisting of a communal meal, prayers, psalms or hymns, exhortation, and the Eucharistic meal. This type of worship maintained Jewish forms, but a new spirit was expressed in the interpretation of scripture, the recognition of the presence of Jesus and the power of the Spirit, and the expectation of the Second Coming (Reed, 1947).

About twenty years after the development of the Jerusalem type of worship, the gentile-Christian type of worship developed in Corinth and Asia Minor. This worship was common in the churches that Paul organized and it was quite distinct from Judaism. These worshipers did not meet daily, but once a week on the Lord’s Day, Sunday. This day along



with the Lord's Supper, or Eucharist, were established before any of the New Testament books were written (Reed, 1947).

Church Development

From the early churches that Paul organized to the churches we worship in today, a pattern of development can be seen and is broken down into six different periods (Harper, 1991).

100-500 C.E. FORMATIVE PERIOD

The early Church that was influenced by the Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, Rome, and other Mediterranean countries was established.

300-700 C.E. MONASTIC PERIOD

Christianity spread to the outer limits of the Roman Empire and important regional practices and liturgies were established. Monasticism helped to form and spread these liturgies.

700-800 C.E. MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The Frankish emperor, Charlemagne, attempted to establish a unified pattern of ecclesiastical organization and worship in Western Europe.

1100-1500 C.E. LATE MEDIEVAL ROMAN PERIOD

A streamlined form of the medieval order under Charlemagne evolved to meet the needs of the Pope's chapel in Rome.

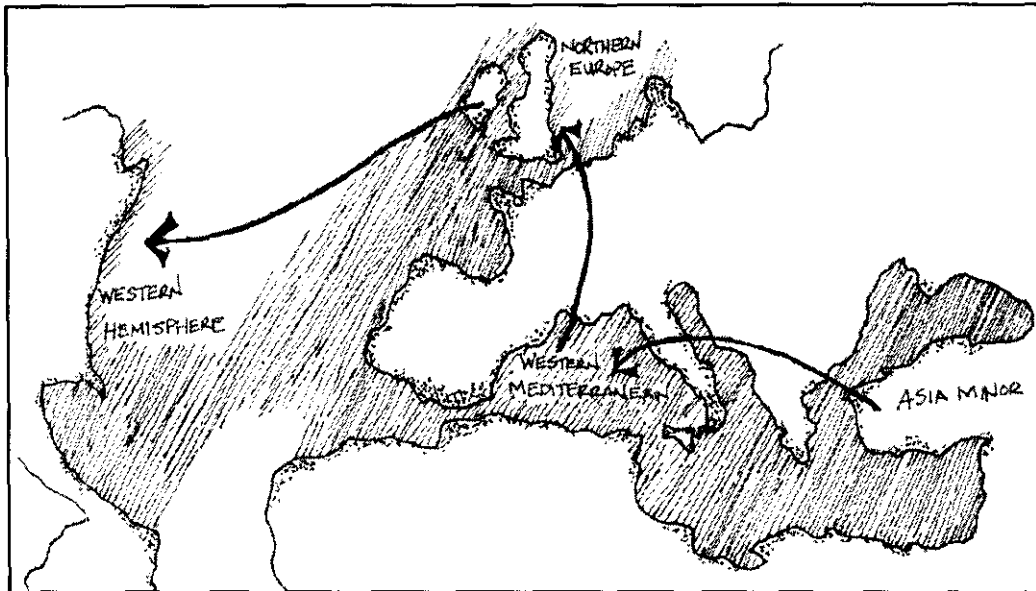


1500-1950 C.E. REFORMATION PERIOD

The order established in the late medieval Roman period became the normative form of worship in the Roman Catholic Church. In Protestant churches, individual vernacular forms of worship were established. These forms were practiced until the late modern liturgical period and some are still practiced today.

1950 C.E.- MODERN LITURGICAL PERIOD

The principal churches following 'Western' traditions (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran) revised their patterns of worship. This is also the time of the Second Vatican Council in the Roman Catholic Church.



Liturgical Development

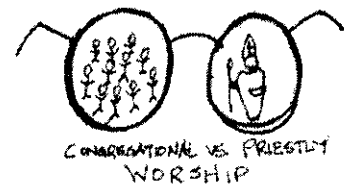
Throughout these periods of church history, the liturgy was also developing. It moved from beginnings in Asia Minor to the western end of the Mediterranean, next to northern



Europe and finally to the western hemisphere. The language of the liturgy changed as well, from Greek to Latin to German and finally English (Commission of the Liturgy and Hymnal, 1958). Part of the history of the liturgy involved the events that took place during the sixteenth century and Martin Luther's desire to reform the Medieval Church.

Martin's Motivation

Martin Luther had concerns for the Catholic Church and sought, not to destroy any part of it, but to purify it. He protested against the features of the Church that were not biblically anchored and gospel centered and proposed many reforms for the church. In Luther's reforms, it would have been easy for him to create a new order to be used for mass rather than the historic mass, but he did not want to lose the devotional, artistic, and spiritual inheritance of the church. Rather, he took the mass and by removing unbiblical impurities, had it express the thought of the New Testament and primitive Christianity. He retained vestments and the singing of Latin chants in the worship, and he emphasized the sermon as an important part of the service. Criticizing the corruption of the medieval mass, Luther wrote the Formula Missae to realign the mass with its New Testament foundation. Viewing worship from a congregational rather than priestly approach, he wrote the liturgy in the vernacular language to allow more participation. He expressed his rejection of the medieval corruptions (the ideas of obligation, sacrifice, and good works) while seeking to preserve historic order. He distinguished between essential and nonessential features in the Mass. In his



Formula, he kept all of the service in Latin, except for the sermon and the hymns, so as to preserve and appreciate its classic cultural value (Reed, 1947).

As time progressed, services were being produced in the vernacular language of its worshipers. Against Luther's preference, he was persuaded to prepare a German liturgy. Taking time and consideration, he wrote it mainly to allow the uneducated laity to participate in the service. Much different than the medieval church, his focus and intent of the service was to teach the scripture and the historic faith of the church. By writing the liturgy in German, there was opportunity for more laity to understand the scripture and participate in the service. He also allowed the whole congregation to be involved in worship by writing hymns for the church to sing. In these vernacular reforms he chose not to dramatically change the service, but he desired to retain as much of the historic order and content of the service as possible (Reed, 1947).

Lutherans in America

Luther's reforms dramatically changed the church however, and against his intentions, developed a new religious group known at first as Evangelical and later as Lutheran. This religion spread throughout Germany and Northern Europe and as these countries immigrated to the United States, it also spread to America. The earliest American Lutherans were Hollanders and Swedes settling in Dutch colonies along the Hudson River between 1623 and 1625. When Germans immigrated to the United States, the number of American Lutherans greatly increased. These early Lutheran settlers built a few churches in Pennsylvania. However, there was no general organization or oversight of these churches and there was no



regular minister. There were many irregular preachers who claimed to be ordained ministers, but with no proof of ordination or consistency in leadership, much dissension occurred. In the mid-eighteenth century, these churches sent a request to the Lutheran church in London to send a pastor to America to establish order (Reed, 1947).

After much delay, Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg was sent to Pennsylvania in 1742. While in America, he prepared a liturgy with his sense of historical and devotional values and appreciation for church order. The Muhlenberg liturgy was adopted into the church by the ministerium in 1748 and laid the foundation for common liturgy in America. Later, in 1786, he selected hymns for a hymnal and wrote its preface. These developments in American liturgy aided in reaching Muhlenberg's hope of "one church, one book" a day when all American Lutheran congregations would be united and use the same liturgy and worship book (Reed, 1947).

The realities of his hope have been seen in the hymnal and liturgical developments to follow. One development was the publication of the *Church Book* in 1868 by the General Council. This hymnal was prepared by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and included Luther's Small Catechism, the Augsburg Confession, and portions of liturgy necessary for Sunday services as established by Muhlenberg. The organizations of the United Lutheran Churches in America and the *Common Service Book* in 1918 were also realities of his hope. The *Common Service Book* was a complete hymnal with the liturgy, series of occasional services, musical settings for the liturgy and hymns, and information regarding ceremonies, altar paraments, and colors used in the service. The accomplishment of the United Lutheran Church is described as such:



The organization of the United Lutheran Church and the preparation of the *Common Service Book and Hymnal* were expressions of the American spirit. It spoke in comprehensiveness of plan, catholicity of outlook, compact and practical arrangement, and in the extensive use of the book by the people and clergy throughout the continent. (Reed, 1947, p.204)

Muhlenberg's hope fulfilled did not stop with these establishments in 1918. In 1945 eight churches began to work on a service book and hymnal that would fulfill a desire "for a common worship in a common tongue as a sign of a common Lutheran heritage," (Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, 1978, p.7). In 1958 they published the *Service Book*



and Hymnal, known to some as the 'old red book.' This new worship book expressed in its liturgy a culmination of common service tradition and the start of an ecumenical heritage. As time went on, attitudes toward worship changed slightly and the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship entered in dialogue with congregations, pastors, musicians, and theologians to discuss a series of trial-use booklets called, *Contemporary Worship*. Testing and shaping the contents of these booklets developed the worship book that the ELCA uses today, *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, 1978). More recently, in 1995, *With One Voice*, a worship book supplement was prepared and published simply as an additional volume of resources for Lutheran worship (*With One Voice*, 1995).



Questions:

1. What is the connection between ancient Jewish worship and Christian worship

today? _____

2. What was Martin Luther's concern for the medieval church? How did this concern
evolve and affect the church? _____

3. List some of the problems of the early Lutheran churches in America.

4. How were those problems resolved with time? What developments have taken place
since then? _____

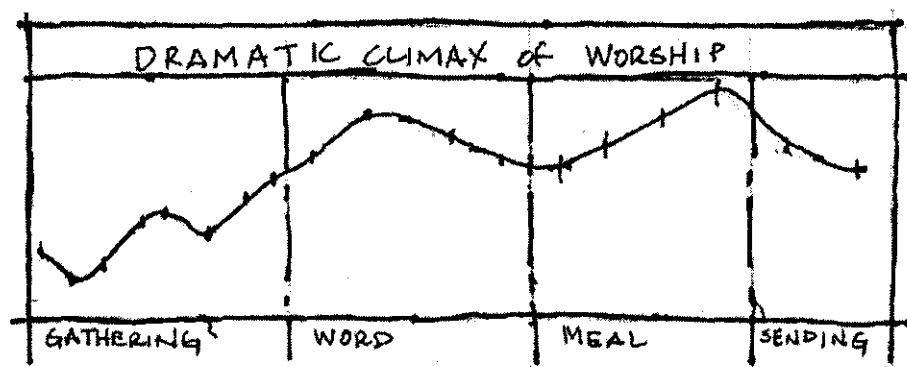
Application:

How have you seen worship and church evolve? Give a brief history of your
experiences at the church you have attended the longest.



The Order for Worship

The earliest forms of liturgy intended to perpetuate communion with Christ, similar to the Disciples' communion with Christ. Through this communion with Christ, they experienced communion with God. In obedience to Christ's commands to baptize, share in the Holy Supper, and instruct the faithful, Christians began to assemble together to read the scriptures, sing hymns, pray, and act out the commands. With these actions of Word and Sacrament, early Christians recognized a core around which expressions of adoration, confession, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving were made. As the church year evolved, these actions of faith were rehearsed and celebrated more and the liturgy grew. Having Jewish, Greek, and Christian influences, our liturgy includes various structural elements (Reed, 1947). When placed together, these elements present a swift moving drama with every element in its place. The plot of the drama reveals a developing relationship between Jesus Christ and his bride, the church. The drama consists of four acts. The baptized *gather* to meet Christ. They hear from Christ through his *word* and speak to him in prayer. They share with him the *meal* of bread and wine and are *sent* back into the world to tell everyone of their new love relationship (*With One Voice*, 1995).



The next four chapters will explore the text of these four scenes and look at the supplementary roles of each. Students will learn the meaning and significance of the text of each aspect of the Lutheran liturgy, by looking at the traditional liturgy found in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Inter-Lutheran Commission, 1978), by looking at a contemporary liturgy, and by writing their own liturgy, piece by piece.

Activity:

Explore *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Look at the Orders for Confession and Forgiveness and the Holy Communion settings. As you work through this curriculum, follow along in *Lutheran Book of Worship*



Act I: Gathering

“Assemble, all of you, and hear.” (Isaiah 48:14)

Have you ever gone to a theater production after a long day of busy-ness and chaos?

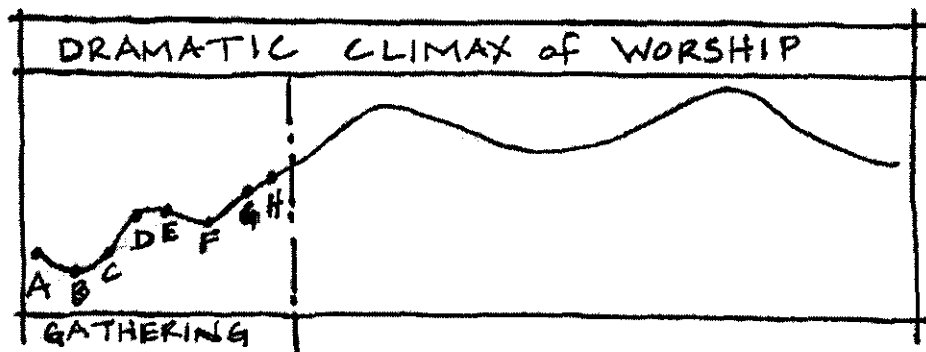
As you sit in your seat in the theater and wait for the show to begin, you listen to the background music and calm your mind in preparation to view the performance. With the start of the show, your attention is drawn to the stage and without realizing it, you have made a transition from the hectic world outside the theater to the stress-free atmosphere inside the theater. Not to say that worship is, or should be, a production, but it can be compared to a drama. In a worship sanctuary, as in a theater, there is a gathering of individuals who collectively focus on what is presented to them and participate in responding to that information. This gathering serves as an introduction and preparation to what lies ahead in the drama. It is a time for individuals to look past the individual and meet their Creator. As one minister said, “It is a time to realize that God is God and I am not” (McPherson, 2002). In the gathering Christ meets his bride, the church. He allows her to speak. She admits her shortcomings and receives his forgiveness to be fully prepared for the relationship.



Key Question: What are the various aspects of the Gathering and what role does the Gathering play in the worship service?

Key Gathering Components:

- A. *Invocation*
- B. *Confession*
- C. *Absolution*
- D. *Entrance Hymn*
- E. *Apostolic Greeting*
- F. *Kyrie*
- G. *Hymn of Praise*
- H. *Salutation and Prayer of the Day*



The Bride Addresses Christ: The Invocation

Scripture References: Colossians 3:17, Ephesians 2:18,
I Corinthians 12:3



P: *"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"*

C: *"Amen."*

All liturgical text in the boxes is taken from *Lutheran Book of Worship*, setting one (Inter-Lutheran Commission, 1978)

The characters are introduced in the very beginning of our drama. In liturgical worship, the pastor, representing the bride, or the church, addresses God in the invocation. To invoke means to call upon God for help. It is addressed to God as an affirmation of our faith in the Holy Trinity. Although God already knows our hearts, it is a prayer of profession, showing God that we are gathered in the Lord's name and it is in God's name that we offer prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. As we meet for the first time in the service, the invocation is an expression of our awareness of God's presence and our placement in His presence. This invocation invokes the Trinity's divine blessing on the service (Reed, 1947). By using the phrase, "In the name of..." we are not simply referring to the title that we give to God, or Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. "In the name of..." refers to the nature of the person being addressed. In other words, by saying "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" we are describing the Trinity's nature. As the bride meets Christ, she addresses him by stating observations of his character. Although no descriptions could honor the Trinity



more than “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” the invocation could be worded differently.

invoke= to call upon for help

Alternate Liturgy:

“In the name of our Creator, and of our Redeemer, and of our Counselor.”

Questions:

1. What are the necessary elements in the invocation?

2. What role does the invocation play in the service?

3. How do the scripture references on page 23 relate to the invocation?

Application:

Write your own invocation, stating that you are gathered in the presence of our Triune God. In writing the invocation, address God in God’s Trinitarian nature.



The Bride Lets Her Guard Down: Confession

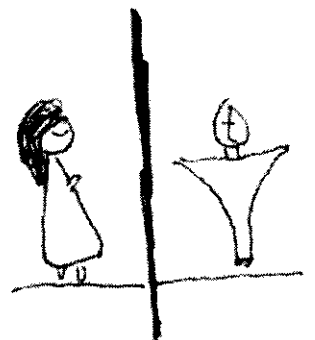
Scripture Reference: I John 1:8-9

P: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

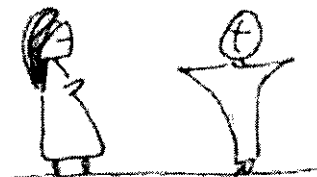
Silence for reflection and self-examination

P: "Most merciful God,"

C: "We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen."



BEFORE CONFESSION



AFTER CONFESSION



In the development of any relationship, the female being pursued needs to let her guard down and allow her pursuer to approach her. Likewise, in worship, we must let go of our pride and stand before God's majesty. One way of doing so is by confessing that we are weak with shortcomings before our God who is strong with righteousness. In most worship services confession comes before prayer, song, and scripture reading to show that we are sinful as human beings and need to be cleansed of our sins to properly receive the blessings that God has prepared for us. To be cleansed of our sins, it is required of us that we admit our shortcomings to God and turn away from them. We join with the priesthood of believers in confessing our weakness and enumerating our known transgressions. The Confession is also a plea for God's grace and mercy. It is a humble request acknowledging that we cannot be cleansed or even desire to be cleansed without God's help. It is in the confession that the bride lets her guard down, confessing her wrongdoings, and allows Christ to approach her (Reed, 1947).

Alternate Liturgy:

"Lord, as the apostle Paul has confessed, so do we that we know we are of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin and we do not do what we want, but we do the very thing we hate. (Romans 7:14,15) And the things that you would love for us to do, we have neglected. We have also neglected you in our thoughts and behaviors of our daily routine. Our sin toward you has resulted in sin toward others. We ask you to please forgive us and increase in our life, so that we may more fully love and serve you. Amen."



Questions:

1. Looking at the examples of confession here, what are their significant elements?

2. What role does the confession play in the service?

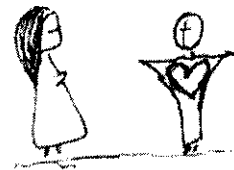
3. How does the scripture reference on page 25 relate to the confession?

Application:

Following the components of the traditional and alternate liturgy, write your own confession.

Christ's Love for His Sinful Bride: The Absolution

Scripture Reference: I John 1:12



P: "In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit."

As Christ approaches his bride in her vulnerable state of confession, he shows his interest toward her in looking past her faults and sharing his joy with her. Following our



humble confession, is the Good News found throughout the New Testament. The Good News is a statement of absolution confirming that our sins have been erased by our Savior, Jesus Christ. It lets us know of the grace and mercy freely given to us once we acknowledge our sins before God. It shows that we have done no good work to deserve our forgiveness, but if we believe in Jesus Christ and trust in his forgiveness, then we shall receive it. Likewise, the bride humbly reveals herself to Christ and receives his favor. Here it seems that the relationship begins and the plot develops. After being cleansed and transformed to worship in spirit and in truth, the congregation usually joins in singing an entrance hymn. With its jubilant tone, it marks the actual beginning of the service. The entrance hymn can be used to set the tone for the service and its purpose is to call the congregation to united consideration of the central thought, or theme, of the service (Reed, 1947).

Alternate Liturgy:

“Our God has heard the cries and felt our pain and has had mercy on us. God has seen our need and provided for our salvation; seen our condition and provided the solution; seen our heart and given us a Savior. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our sin is no longer the weight that holds us down. We are free to live in victory, free from the sin of our self-deceit and free from Satan’s power.

Praise God for goodness.” (Taken from “Mid-Week Worship” used at The Lutheran Center, Ball State University, 2003)



Questions:

1. What role does the absolution play in the service?

2. How does the scripture reference on page 27 relate to the absolution?

Application:

Expressing the Good News of forgiveness, write your own absolution.

The Relationship Progresses: Apostolic Greeting

Scripture Reference: II Corinthians 13:14



P: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

C: "And also with you."

At this time, the minister addresses and bestows a blessing upon the congregation.

The congregation returns the blessing to the minister. This serves as a welcome and a transition to the next supplementary role. In the relationship of Christ and the church, it is a stepping stone to proceed in knowing each other better.



Questions:

1. Looking at the apostolic greeting, what is the name given to each person in the Trinity and what is the blessing bestowed from each person?

2. Look at the following greetings in the New Testament: Romans 1:7, I Corinthians 1:3, II Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, Colossians 1:2, I Thessalonians 1:1, II Thessalonians 1:2, I Timothy 1:2, II Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4, Philemon 3, I Peter 1:2, II Peter 1:2, II John 3, Jude 2, Revelation 1:4. What two words are present in each greeting? _____

3. What role does the apostolic greeting play in the service?

4. How does the scripture reference on page 29 relate to the text of the apostolic greeting? _____

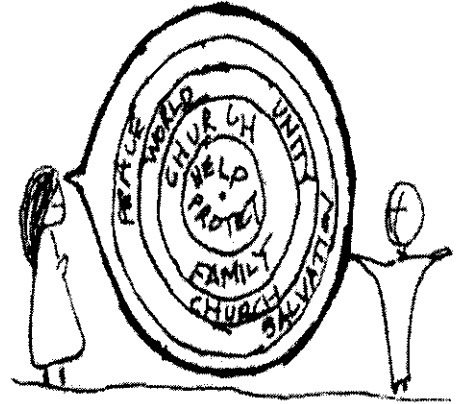
Application:

Write your own greeting based on these examples. Include as basic elements, a name for Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit and a blessing of each.



The Bride Reveals Her Needs: Kyrie

Scripture Reference: Luke 17:13



P: "In peace, let us pray to the Lord."

C: "Lord, have mercy."

P: "For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord."

C: "Lord, have mercy."

P: "For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord."

C: "Lord, have mercy."

P: "For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord."

C: "Lord, have mercy."

P: "Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord."

C: "Amen."

As the relationship proceeds in our drama, the bride humbly reveals more of herself and pleads for Christ's interest in her. The drama moves to a higher level of intensity. In worship, the kyrie, being the first prayer of the service after the confession, lifts the service to



high levels at its beginning. Its petitions have spiritual dimensions of breadth, height, and depth. They reflect the meaning of the words *kyrie eleison*, or Lord, have mercy, and express our humble plea for God to look past our faults and bestow His blessings on us and others recognizing the presence of Christ. These petitions also move from general to specific requests. Just as the bride develops a relationship with Christ, she begins by telling him general information about herself. As they develop in friendship, she begins to reveal more and more of herself and trusts that he will respond accordingly.

<i>kyrie eleison=</i> <i>Lord, have mercy</i>
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Alternate Liturgy:

P: "In calmness and unity let us come before the Lord."

C: "Lord, draw us nearer."

P: "For restoration of weary souls, we ask of you O Lord,"

C: "Lord, draw us nearer."

P: "For the whole world to be in the kingdom of God and for that kingdom to grow past differences, we ask you O Lord,"

C: "Lord, draw us nearer."

P: "For this congregation and church home and for all families and friends represented here, we ask you O Lord,"

C: "Lord, draw us nearer."

P: "Be our protection, our joy, our peace, everlasting Father."

C: "Amen."



Questions:

1. What role does the kyrie play in the service?

2. How does the scripture reference on page 31 relate to the kyrie?

Application:

Write your version of a kyrie.

The Bride's Joy in Christ: Hymn of Praise

Scripture References: Luke 2:14, Revelation 5:9-13, 19:4-9



P: "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth."

C: "Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father: we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God: you take away the sin of the world; Have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen."



The bride's trust in Christ to receive her is expressed in her Hymn of Praise. The Hymn of Praise responds to the kyrie with proclamations of God's glory and joy in God's merciful goodness in sending His son to be our Savior. Changing in mood from the kyrie, it is an outburst of joy and praise that lifts the worshipers from thoughts of self to contemplation of the divine, from a consciousness of human need to the glorification of God's majesty, power, and holiness. It is not just a hymn of praise, but also a "jubilant anthem of redemption" (Reed, 1947).

Alternate Liturgy:

God, our Father, master in heaven, builder of the earth: With an attitude of gratitude we give you glory. And you gave us your son to be the master on earth.

Jesus Christ, our Lord, God's chosen and precious cornerstone. Head of the church, you have died and come to life again and because of your love you have freed us from our sins. Continue to love us for no one else can love like you do, no one else is dependable like you, no one else is perfect like you. No one else is holy. You alone are worthy, Holy one of God. Amen.

Questions:

1. How is Christ's nature expressed in the hymn of praise?

2. What role does the hymn of praise play in the service?



3. How do the scripture references on page 33 relate to the Hymn of Praise?

Application:

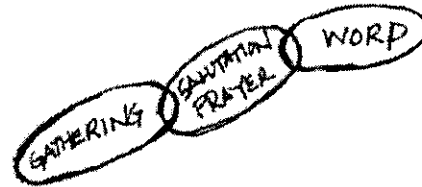
Write your own hymn of praise.

Sharing Words: Salutation and Prayer of the Day

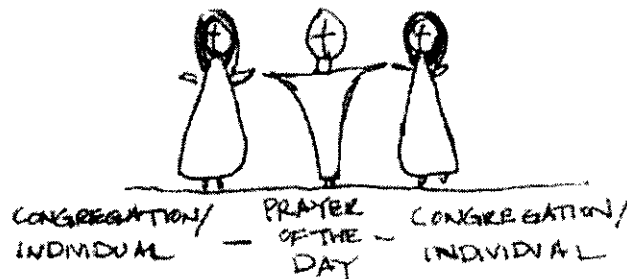
Scripture References: Luke 1:28, Judges 6:12, II Thessalonians 3:16

P: *"The Lord be with you."*

C: *"And also with you."*



Once again, developing greater intimacy in our relationship with Christ and moving along in our drama, there is a transition. The salutation marks the beginning of a new division of the worship service. It serves as the transition and link from one role to the next role. The salutation is a Hebrew form of greeting and response expressing the nature of God with us, Emmanuel. It is not addressed to God, but to the congregation. However, it is a reciprocal prayer in which the minister prays for the people and their response is a prayer for the minister (Reed, 1947).



Following the Salutation, the congregation represents the bride of Christ, agreeing with Christ in the Prayer of the Day. The Prayer of the Day is a brief, but significant, prayer appointed for each Sunday. Because it is appointed, it not only unites the individuals in the congregation to each other, but it unites the congregation to congregations around America. Relating to the Gospel and Epistles, it prepares the worshiper's mind for the liturgical lessons to be read that Sunday. The Prayer of the Day generally contains five components.

1. Invocation- Addresses God
2. Basis for Petition- Recalls some quality or promise of God
3. Petition- Makes a request of God
4. Purpose/Benefit Desired- Reason for the request made
5. Ending/Doxology- Ends the prayer in Jesus' name

The Prayer of the Day ends with the words, "through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end." This ending expresses a belief in the Triune God and it fulfills Christ's promise that, "whatsoever you ask in my name, that will I do" (John 14:13). In our developing relationship it expresses our trust in Christ and prepares us to move on to higher levels of intimacy and the next scene of our worship drama.

Questions:

1. List the five components of the prayer of the day. _____



2. What role do the salutation and prayer of the day play in the service?

3. How do the scripture references on page 35 relate to the salutation and prayer of the day? _____

Application:

1. Looking at the following prayer of the day, list the words that refer to each of its five parts.

"Eternal God, it is your glory always to have mercy. Bring back all who have erred and strayed from your ways; lead them again to embrace in faith the truth of your Word and to hold it fast; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen." (Prayer of the day, 2003, March 16)

2. Using Mark 1:14-20 as the Gospel, write your own prayer of the day. Include the five components.



Act II: Word

“Give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching.”

I Timothy 4:13

As you are sitting in the theater, you have given the show your attention. As the story unfolds and you are focusing more on the stage ahead of you, you are more prepared to really listen to each character. Listening to these characters, you begin to see the big picture of the production and understand the plot. During a worship service, the gathering, meeting Christ, prepares us to really listen to the scriptures. After telling Christ our story in the gathering, we are prepared to listen to his story from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament Epistle, and the Gospels. Each lesson, examined separately, has individual significance and meaning, but placed next to each other they reveal a collective theme for the day and point to the One who inspired them. Gordon Lathrop (1994) describes it as such, “one passage set next to another, set next to yet another helps us to see both the fullness of God’s gift and the sense that it is not so much before the readings themselves as before the One whom they serve that we are gathered” (p.13). This understanding of the use of various passages of interrelated scripture has led to the development of the lectionary used by liturgical Christian churches. The lectionary is the appointed table of scripture used for each Sunday or festival of the church year. It follows a three-year cycle. Each year focuses on one of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) with John interspersed. The Old Testament and New Testament readings that go along with each Gospel reading, further express the main idea of the Gospel.



Each church year is also divided into different seasons and the scripture reading reflects that season. The first four weeks of the church year make up the Advent Season. These four weeks in December precede Christmas and are marked by expressions of anticipation of Christ's birth. The Christmas Season is the twelve days of celebrating Christ's birth leading to the Epiphany Season. Epiphany lasts four to nine weeks beginning in January. The word Epiphany means 'awakening' and it expresses thanks for Christ revealing himself to the world. This season also celebrates the baptism and transfiguration of Christ. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, the forty days that follow Epiphany and precede Easter are known as the Lenten Season. Lent marks a time of somber reflection on Christ's preparation for crucifixion. It includes a close look at the Passion story of Christ during Holy Week, the week preceding Easter. The Easter Season begins on Resurrection Sunday and is fifty days of rejoicing and celebrating Christ's victory over death. It concludes on the Day of Pentecost that marks the beginning of the Pentecost Season. This season contains twenty-four weeks and makes up the second half of the church year. Pentecost Season is a time of celebrating the life of the church and the Holy Spirit's work among us. The Gospel readings for the first half of the church year (Christmas to Easter) are a retelling of Jesus' life on earth. The Gospel readings of the second half of the church year (Pentecost to Advent) present a selection of Christ's parables, miracles, and teachings. These readings are intended to tell our story as Jesus' disciples (Reed, 1947).

The lectionary is used also to bring order to the overall church. It shows that the churches gather together as an assembly before the word of God. Appointing scripture, also brings unity to the overall church because it does not allow preachers to choose scripture



passages according to their own moods, agendas, or projections. However, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, straying from the lectionary every once in awhile is acceptable (Lathrop, 1994).

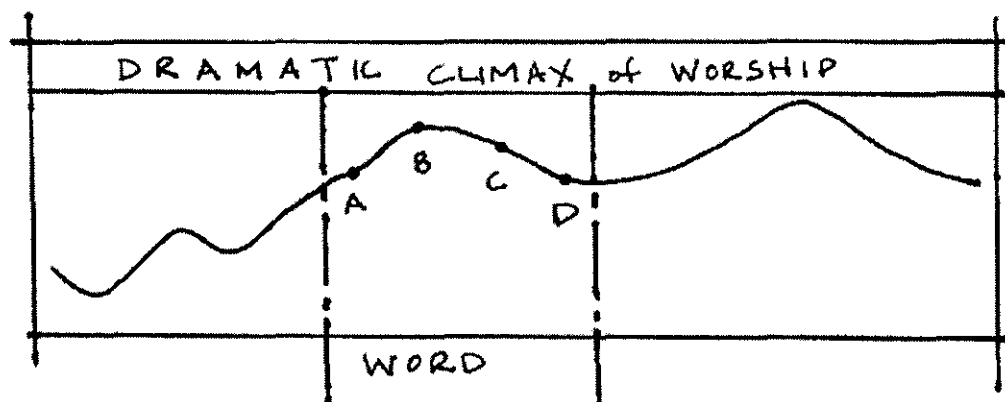
The reading of the scriptures for each Sunday leads to the teaching of the scriptures in the sermon in which the bride inherits the same interests as Christ. From the reading and teaching of the Word, we profess our faith and trust in Christ in the Creed and the Prayers of the Church. Gordon Lathrop (1999) summarizes the Word, this second scene of our worship, in the following way:

Similarly, if we make use of the western three-year lectionary, with its three readings for each Sunday, we may understand the second reading, from the New Testament letters, as always supplying 'the horizon of the church.' But it will do so not because it is necessarily a reading 'about' the church, nor because its counsel is always currently wise, but because we stand with those ancient Christians, evoked in that ancient correspondence...around the mystery of risen Christ present in the reading of Hebrew Scriptures and Gospels and present in the preaching of those texts into our today (p.85-86).



Key Question: What purpose does the Word serve in our worship drama?

Key Word Components: A. *Lessons and Gospel*
B. *Sermon*
C. *Creed*
D. *Prayers of the Church*



Christ Shares His Stories: The Lessons

Appointed Lessons from the Third Sunday After Epiphany:



Jonah 3:1-5, Psalm 62:1-12, I Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20

As the relationship between Christ and the church grows deeper in our worship drama, Christ begins to tell his story through the appointed lessons. The lessons are introduced by stating their book and chapter in the Bible, allowing the congregation to know exactly when the readings begin and end. As they are read, the bride listens and thoughtfully considers each lesson before the next one is read.

The first lesson is always taken from the Old Testament. It tells of Christ's foundation as if he is revealing his past and introducing his family to his bride. It uses the historical, poetic, or prophetic texts from ancient sources to enrich the service and further illustrate the Gospel reading. Sometimes the first lesson is omitted from the service. However, including it is important to reflect the practice of the early churches (Reed, 1947).

First Lesson= Old Testament Jewish foundation
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In reaction to the first lesson, the bride responds with a psalm. An appointed psalm can be sung or chanted as a form of communal song. It is used to receive and meditate on the first lesson (Lathrop, 1994).

Psalm= reflection

Christ begins a second story in the second lesson. The second lesson always comes from the New Testament and usually comes from one of the epistles. Thus, it is sometimes



referred to as the Epistle rather than the second lesson. Nevertheless, this reading is used as instruction. It shows an example of the New Testament churches that lived from the scriptures. By looking at these examples, the second lesson is intended to instruct the congregation how to apply the Gospel to life. In our developing relationship with Christ, the second lesson guides the bride in her spiritual growth (Lathrop, 1994).

Second Lesson=
New Testament instruction

Christ Tells His Bride About His Life: The Gospel

Scripture Reference: John 6:68



C: "Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia. Alleluia."

P: "The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the first chapter."

C: "Glory to you, O Lord."

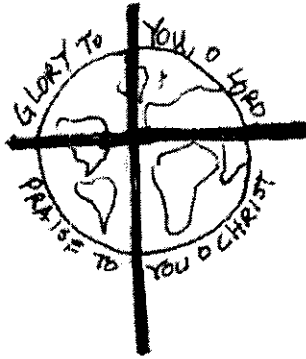
Mark 1:14-20 is read.

C: "Praise to you, O Christ."

After Christ shares with his bride his background and his instructions for spiritual living, he shares stories from his own life and experiences as recorded in the Gospels. The bride shows her joy and excitement to hear this Good News. Before the Gospel of the day is read, the congregation joins in the alleluia verse. Alleluia is a Hebrew word meaning "praise Yahweh" that Christians have used to celebrate Christ's resurrection. Opening and closing



the gospel with “Glory to you, O Lord” and “Praise to you, O Christ” is a recognition of



Christ’s real presence in the word and the worship. The gospel marks the liturgical climax of the first half of the service. It presents the central, objective thought of the day (Reed, 1947). The congregation stands during the gospel, not because it is the most important reading, but because this story of Jesus is the interpretive key to the other scriptures (Lathrop, 1994).

Questions:

1. How does the scripture reference on page 43 relate to the gospel acclamation?

Applying Christ’s Stories: The Sermon

Following the gospel, the minister preaches the sermon. This is the point in the relationship where Christ and the bride understand each other. The bride adopts Christ’s way of thinking and learns from him in preaching and hearing the sermon. The sermon should relate to the lessons for liturgical unity in the service. It is the voice of the living church, lifted in instruction. “The sermon combines sacramental and sacrificial elements. It is an interpretation and expansion of the Word. It is also an expression

